

law, Edmund Kay, went into the ice business. Delivering ice proved as profitable socially as financially for he met and fell in love with Mary Giles, who was working for one of his customers.

When Mr. Giles decided to go to Utah and take Mary with him, John determined it was time to travel west also. In September, 1856, he married Mary in Provo and the two set up housekeeping in the wagon John had used to cross the plains. Until the time came to start the new settlement in Provo Valley, the Crooks worked in conjunction with Thomas Rasband and the Giles family, learning how to farm the ten acre plot which had been purchased jointly. He joined the first company which left Utah Valley to settle the present town of Heber, and the journal which he later made has proved to be an outstanding source for the early history of the valley.

The organization for settling the valley failed to form a company soon enough for some of the more ardent enthusiasts. By the middle of April the excitement for new land prompted a small group to move out. Three wagons were fitted, and on April 29, 1859, the group of ten men began the trek to Provo Valley. The ten were John Jordan, John Crook, C. N. Carroll, William Giles, John and James Carlyle, Jesse Bond, Hyrum Chatwin, Thomas Rasband, and a brother Carpenter.¹⁰

The group that set out the last of April met their only challenge on the journey in the form of a snow-slide crossing the road near the south fork of the Provo River. They camped here the first night, and early the next morning they took the wagons to pieces and packed the parts and provisions up the slide until good wheeling could be had once more. The night of April 30th they camped at William Wall's ranch in the neck of the valley. The next day they crossed the river to

¹⁰The Journal of John Crook, p. 36.

the east side of the main valley and continued northward to Daniel's ranch and creek. This creek was still frozen over, and the teams easily crossed it on the ice. A little further and the ranch and house of William Meeks was seen. This was the same man who had been placed in charge of the organizations for the valley settlement the previous winter. John Crook records that Mr. Carpenter had shot a sandhill crane and insisted upon cooking it for breakfast, "which caused much merriment in camp."

The search for a suitable camping place brought them in contact with three men plowing a strip on the plot laid off the previous summer. They were surprised to learn that the three—William Davidson, Robert Broadhead, and James Davis—had arrived two weeks earlier from Nephi in Juab County.

The next day the company moved their wagons to a spring which they had discovered on the east side of the valley and built a wickiup of poles, covered with willows, wheat grass, and dirt, large enough to hold thirty men. This shelter was shared with the parties which soon followed and became known as the London Wickiup because of its great size.¹¹ The spring was called London Spring as a result.

Plowing and planting were the order of the day and continued although it was necessary to don overcoats and gloves for the snow storm that came three days later and lasted two weeks. The last of May, William Meeks, Jesse Fuller, the deputy surveyor, and a group of men arrived at the camp and held a meeting concerning ownership of the plots surveyed the previous summer. Those assembled voted to resurvey the ground, and the next morning a stampede took place for the best land.¹² Land hungry settlers came all summer, and by fall the square mile reserved for a city was laid out in blocks and lots. A fort, forty rods square, was surveyed on the

¹¹John Crook, "History of Wasatch County," *op. cit.*
¹²*ibid.*

London
Spring

townsite and families immediately moved onto it and commenced building. John W. Witt and his family were the first to finish a log cabin on the fort line. He had previously cut the logs for a dwelling on the bank of Lake Creek, and when the fort was surveyed he was able to put up a log cabin in two days. His building was soon followed by others. Many of the settlers who had built wickiups at London Spring moved them down to the fort so that by winter there were seventeen families established on the site. A few families had moved onto their city lots and commenced building substantial log houses also.

Snow began falling in September even before Jesse McCarroll could bring his threshing machine up from Provo to thresh the grain, and much of the wheat was shriveled by frost. November was filled with monotonous days of snowing, and in December the weather turned clear and intensely cold. Clear weather offered opportunity to haul firewood from the Big Grove at the center north field; and the squeaking, snow-covered wagon wheels could be heard a mile away.¹²

Some of the pioneers celebrated Christmas with a banquet prepared by Sarah Lee. John and Sarah Lee were among the later settlers to arrive in the valley that first year, and they had taken up residence in a log cabin two blocks southwest of the fort. Their cabin was not large enough to accommodate all the settlers, and so six families were invited to come and share a feast which included ground cherry pudding and squash pie.

During Christmas week a sleighing party of young folks arrived from Provo and treated the valley residents to a gay round of dancing and amusement until New Years Day. From then until March there were no visitors, no mail—only bitter cold weather.

The first Thursday in March the Mormon settlers

¹²*Ibid.*

held a fast meeting in Thomas Rasband's house to pray for an early spring. John Crook records the event as follows:

All hands prayed fervently to the Lord to temper the elements and cause the snow to melt, that we might be able to put in crops in the season thereof. And by noon the eaves on the north side of the house were dripping water from the snow melting. By the middle of the month the snow was gone.¹⁴

Spring of 1860 brought additional settlers from Provo, and by fall of that year the fort line was filled with over forty families. That summer a twenty by forty foot double log cabin was built in the center of the fort to serve as a school and meeting house.

By the end of 1862 many families had settled on the townsite proper and Heber, named after Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young's popular first counselor, was a flourishing pioneer community.

¹⁴The Journal of John Crook, p. 39.